

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T COLOMBO 002011

SIPDIS

OFFICIAL INFORMAL

FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/13

TAGS: AMGT CE MV LTTE

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL INFORMAL NUMBER 51 (11/20/03)

CLASSIFIED BY DCM JAMES F. ENTWISTLE FOR REASONS 1.5 b and d.

CONTENTS: ESF
MALDIVES

LATEST ON POLITICAL CRISIS

- SEIZURE OF UNMANNED SPY PLANES BY SL CUSTOMS
- EU COMMISSIONER TO VISIT NEXT WEEK

ESF

11. (SBU) We understand from AID that 04 global ESF levels are significantly lower than expected. Any SA views on what this might mean? (DCM)

Maldives

12. (S) You will see a frontchannel reporting that the GORM has officially asked that their Guantanamo detainee be sent home. (DCM)

LATEST ON POLITICAL CRISIS

13. (C) FYI. G.L. Peiris, key GSL peace process negotiator, reportedly made conciliatory remarks toward the President during his November 20 weekly press briefing. He is quoted as stating that the President and her party should have a role in government decision-making. In a separate conversation on November 20, Mano Tittawella, a presidential adviser, echoed Peiris' seemingly cooperative tone, saying that the both sides in the "Committee of Officials" have had friendly discussions. The Ambassador and the DCM are scheduled to meet with Tittawella and Harim Peiris, her press spokesman, early next week and will check out how the discussions are faring at that time, a little longer into the committee process. The fact that G.L. Peiris, who is usually a hard-liner toward the President, is speaking in such moderate tones could be a sign that the current crisis is abating. (POL/ECON)

SEIZURE OF UNMANNED SPY PLANES BY SL CUSTOMS

14. (C) FYI. On November 20, the DAILY NEWS, an English language daily, reported that Sri Lankan customs officials had seized two unmanned spy planes and other sensitive radio equipment at the Colombo port. Capable of either being fitted with photographic equipment or being loaded with explosives, the miniature aircraft were said to be the first to be detected in Sri Lanka. The planes were unearthed in a container shipment sent by a firm that has been accused of smuggling goods in the past. Although there is no indication of where the items were headed, the Tigers have attempted to gain airborne surveillance equipment in the past. (POL/DAO)

EU COMMISSIONER TO VISIT HERE WEEK

15. (C) FYI. Chris Patten, the External Relations Commissioner for the European Council, will visit Sri Lanka from November 25-26. According to the local EU mission, Patten is scheduled to meet with the President, PM, a host of MPs from the UNF, Opposition, and Muslim delegation, as well as the four co-chairs and civil society leaders. Patten is also slated to take a trip to Kilinochchi for a meeting with the Tigers. At this point, he is slated to meet with Prabhakaran. (POL)

LUNSTEAD